



THE TAKEAWAY

Life is journey and along the way, we all learn some valuable lessons. Growing Bolder gathers these bits of wisdom and advice from some of your favorite big names.

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Dick Van Dyke and Carl Reiner

Better Than Ever



Photo Courtesy of Carl Reiner and Dick Van Dyke

Carl Reiner

A legend of American comedy who has won 12 Emmys as a writer, producer and performer, 96-year-old Carl Reiner has called the last five years the most productive of his life.

As long as your mind is healthy and you have something to contribute, the number of years that you've been on this earth should be seen as an asset, not a detriment. Contrary to what you may think, genes have little to do with how long you'll live. Neither of my parents lived as long as me, but for some reason I'm hanging in there.

You've got to want to be a part of the living. I get up every day and check the obits. If I'm not in there, I eat breakfast and go right to the computer. I can't wait to see what interesting things I'll get to do next. Thank goodness for tweeting. It's fascinating to me that I'm able to float out my opinions and my thoughts, many of them political, and see how others react.

It's very heartening to be politically active and in the mix at my age. I wrote an op-ed piece in *The New York Times* imploring Supreme Court Justice Kennedy not to retire, and got thousands of reactions.

I don't have many friends left, but Mel Brooks comes over almost every night and we eat dinner and watch *Jeopardy!* I used to walk around the block and had to stop, so now I get on the treadmill and then the stationary bike for 10 minutes every day.

I think the most important thing for anyone is to have something to do when you get up that you can always look forward to.

Dick Van Dyke

One of the most beloved television stars in history, Dick Van Dyke, 92, has won a Tony award and five Emmys and authored five books, including *Keep Moving and Other Tips and Truths about Aging*.

So many young people today say they'd rather die than get old, and it's just so sad. We've got to change the whole culture that centers on being young, pretty and rich. Get rid of those voices in your head that tell you that you're too old to do something new.

We have to keep that childlike wonder about life alive. I'm an amateur computer animator. I create 3D animations on my computer, which is a really involving kind of a hobby.

What's my takeaway? Just keep moving! People throw in the towel and stop doing anything, and that's when they start to seize up. I tell everybody that moving makes you feel better. Make it your habit to move and you'll be amazed! I've seen 90-year-old guys get off their walkers who didn't believe that they could do it.

I get on the treadmill for as long as it feels right. Then I do some resistance and strength training with weights. I've had arthritis since I was 40 years old, but it doesn't bother me because I stretch and I move every day.

The main thing is to get on your feet and get interested in something. Be aware of the mind-body connection, because a little blood and oxygen through your brain will change the way you think. And without exercise, you can't do it.

Curiosity is the Key to a Creative Life



Photo: Timothy Greenfield-Sanders

I made a vow to myself when I was 16 that I would be a writer. I never said I'd be great, or even successful, but writing revealed something within me that I couldn't access in any other way. For seven years, I got nothing but rejection letters. I persisted because I had a passion for something that would allow me to do more than just pay bills and die. Isn't that the way you want to feel, too? I believe there's something in us all that makes us want to follow our curiosity wherever it takes us.

We all follow a path, and these little breadcrumbs of curiosity drop in front of us, tempting us to change our lives — or to at least think about things differently. Too many times, we ignore our own curiosity and fail to fully participate in our own lives. We let our fear overcome our curiosity and our creativity.

I define creative living as any life defined more by curiosity than by fear. Every day, we come upon a fork in the road. One way leads to opportunity and the other leads to fear, which keeps us from opportunity.

You can choose to walk down the path of opportunity, and open your life to endless possibilities, or turn down the road of fear and avoid everything.

I say this as someone who's inherently a very frightened person. I'm nervous, high strung, anxious and sensitive. But here's the key — I am just 1% more curious about the world than I am afraid of it. And that 1% has made all the difference.

Curiosity is the key to Growing Bolder. If you can push past the fear and make a decision to pursue your curiosity and creativity, the world will open up to you.

Before you know it, you'll be actively co-creating your life instead of simply shuffling through in a puddle of despair, shrugging your shoulders and accepting whatever happens around you from day to day.

The road to fear leads to despair and the belief that tomorrow is going to be exactly the same as today. That belief is a lie, because we live in a world that's in constant change.

You must emerge from fear and despair. Ask yourself what you can do to actively and willingly participate in the changes that are going on around you. Don't settle for simply being a witness to your own life. Take control.

Give in to your curiosity.

Don't settle for simply being a witness to your own life. Take control.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar



Photos: Esther Lin

Get in the Game of Life

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is the NBA's all-time leading scorer, a member of the Basketball Hall of Fame and a six-time NBA champion. That's just the short list of kudos he can claim.

Off the court, Abdul-Jabbar's accomplishments are perhaps even more meaningful. He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2016, has earned widespread acclaim for his writing, including op-eds about such topics as culture and race.

He has authored nearly a dozen books, including an autobiography, historical non-fiction, several novels and a memoir about his relationship with legendary basketball coach John Wooden (*Coach Wooden and Me*).

Abdul-Jabbar says Wooden meant everything to him. And the lessons he learned about life began on the very first day when the legendary coach scolded him for something seemingly as trivial as putting on his socks incorrectly.

"The message was, if you don't do the right things to prepare, you won't be ready for opportunity," Abdul-Jabbar recalls. "Something as simple as a blister can keep you from practice. And if you don't practice for Coach Wooden, you don't play—and life is all about getting in the game."

Wooden taught his young athletes much more than simply how to play the game, Abdul-Jabbar notes.

"Coach wanted us to go from having success on the basketball court to having significant change in our lives," he says. "That enabled us to be good dads, good husbands, good citizens."

Abdul-Jabbar also learned how to deal with adversity, something he faced when diagnosed with a chronic form of leukemia. He also underwent quadruple coronary bypass surgery on his 68th birthday.

"Coach Wooden taught me that life is about learning to accept the bad with the good," he explains. "If you have the right attitude, you can negotiate the ups and downs into the best outcomes possible."

Abdul-Jabbar offered this advice, from his experiences on and off the court: "Now in my 70s, I see very clearly that the road to a life well lived is paved with small details, the little stuff, the daily grind and doing that to the best of your ability."

Herbie Hancock



Your Possibilities Are Endless

Photos: Graham Denholm / Stringer / Michael Ochs Archives / Stringer

I want you to do something. Sit down at a piano. Put your thumb on middle C. Now, put your pinky on the C an octave higher. What's between your fingers? Seven white keys and five black. That's it. That's all the notes there are. Yet there are countless songs. From just those notes come infinite possibilities. I have learned that the same holds true with life. Our possibilities are infinite.

These possibilities present us with a set of choices. And the decisions we make about those choices determine the direction of our lives.

Where will you find your possibilities? Just look to your passions. Ask yourself what it is that lights you up, turns you on and brings you to life. There are a million different answers. For me, it's always been music.

We are all hesitant to take risks. None of us want to make mistakes, fail or hit a sour note. It takes developing a fearlessness that allows us to soar. I learned that from Miles Davis. He demanded that all of his musicians think outside the box. He told us we were being paid to take chances and explore new territories.

This led me to some very satisfying personal successes. But it probably cost me some monetary success. Critics said I was too unpredictable and that the record-buying audience wasn't sure what to expect of me. But when people try to steer you away from where you want to go, there's something you must remember: The face you look at in the mirror will always be your own. Personal satisfaction only comes from challenging, trusting and being true to yourself.

I am at a very interesting point in my life. I'm 79 years old. The time has gone by in a flash. I'm blessed by the people who surround me, but none more so than my wife, who has been my rock for over 50 years.

That brings us to the takeaway. Life is about the possibilities around you and what you do about them. Like everyone else, I've had my share of pain and suffering. I've had to battle demons that took me to places I wasn't sure I could return from. So, my message is: Never give up. You can live your life to the fullest. Just look for the possibilities.

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Herbie Hancock is a legendary musician who has been Growing Bolder throughout an incredible career that has spanned seven decades. A true innovator, Hancock has had an enormous influence on acoustic and electric jazz, R&B, hip hop and more, with his constant exploration of many musical genres.

Embrace New Experiences

Throughout his 40-year show business career, Tony Danza has done it all. The former boxer famously got his start when he was spotted in the gym by a producer, leading to his first role on Taxi. Starring roles in beloved shows and films such as Who's the Boss? and Angels in the Outfield followed, earning him Emmy and Golden Globes nominations. He's also starred on Broadway, hosted his own talk show and at 67, he's back in a starring role in the Netflix series The Good Cop, co-starring singer Josh Groban as his son.

Life is about taking advantage of the opportunities you're given. Not in the hopes that they lead to success, but in the hopes they lead to happiness.

When opportunities come into my life, I don't take them in order to succeed or for the chance that they lead to another job. I do them for the joy of the experiences. When I perform my live shows, I'm not out there to get a good review. I go up there to enjoy the gift that's been given to me because everybody in the audience would love to be doing what I'm doing, but I'm the guy getting to do it.

This is a really exciting time in my life. I had my son when I was 19, and when you have a kid at that age, one of two things could happen: you could ruin both of your lives or grow up with the greatest relationship because you basically grow up together. Thankfully in our case, it was the latter. The real beauty of having a kid when you're that young is that he gets to know all your relatives. He knew his great-grandmother, he lived with my mother, he knew all the uncles, all the aunts. A few years back, we sat down and tried to write this sort of memoir cookbook about our relatives and what was great was that he knew stories that I didn't know.

Now, he has his own boys and it's really profound to watch your son fathering his son, especially when he's so much better at it than you are.

I was living in Los Angeles for a long time and unfortunately, my marriage broke up and I ended up moving back to New York. And I've got to tell you, being in New York City, single at this stage of my life is well, as you might imagine, it's nice. I'm really enjoying life and we shot our new Netflix show here in New York City, which is one of the great privileges of all time to use New York as a canvas. I'm just really living large between the act, between this new show, between my family and grandkids, life is good.

My advice is no matter what you do, you have to truly believe that even though you can't do what anybody else could do, they can't do what you can do.



Photo: Charlie Roina-Jill Fritz

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Jeanne Socrates



Photos: Adrian Lam

Still Sailing Solo

I'm a pretty persistent person. I don't take no for an answer easily; and if I can see that there's a way to make something happen, well, I make it happen.

I didn't start sailing until I was 48, and I had to learn from scratch. I was just so taken with it that there was no way I wanted to stop. I've now completed four solo trips around the world.

It's wonderful learning how to manage your boat. It's such a supportive community, and everyone you meet is friendly and supportive.

But it's not always easy. Sometimes you have to contend with bad weather or equipment issues on the boat, but it's an absolutely marvelous way to see the world. I also haven't let physical issues keep me on land. A couple of years ago, I was preparing for a trip and fell off a ladder, breaking my neck and 11 ribs. I was in a brace for three months; and after that, I slowly recovered. But I got back out there as soon as I could.

I love being out in the ocean, thousands of miles from anywhere. I know I can rely on my boat to look after me, as long as I don't do anything really stupid. When you're out there with just the ocean and the sky, you get this feeling of being at one with nature. Then maybe an albatross comes by and you see enormous birds that have adapted so well to the ocean. They sort of look at you and say, "What are you doing out here? This is my territory, my ocean."

The best thing is when you turn off the engine, start sailing and it's just you, the sail and the wind, pushing the boat along, and there's no noise. It's a quiet, peaceful, beautiful way of getting about.

I'm actually quite a sociable person who likes talking to people. When I'm out on my boat, I'm not lonely because I'm not

isolated. I have a long-range radio, and I'm talking on that radio every day to people, many of whom I know quite well, even though I've never met many of my "radio friends" in person.

I'm 77 years old, and I've got plans for the next few years. I have to admit, I normally just don't look at my age. While I've got my health, and while I've got the willingness or the will to do something, I just go ahead and do it.

Quite often, people tell me they would have liked to do something like my around-the-world trips, but their husband or wife or whoever told them it wasn't a good idea or they were too old to try. Don't listen to people like that. If you think you're well enough, and you really want to do it, go ahead and do it. Trust me — it's better to live your dreams instead of sitting around in carpet slippers and wishing you had lived your dreams.

We sometimes have to push ourselves a little bit. If it is something that we would like to do, and we think maybe we can do it, then I'm sure that actually means we can do it. That's my attitude, at least. It's better to have tried and failed than to never have tried.

British yachtswoman Jeanne Socrates holds the record as the oldest person to sail around the world solo, non-stop and unassisted. She's also the only woman to ever accomplish this incredible feat. She completed her record-setting trip in September, 2019, more than 11 months after setting sail. In 2013, at the age of 70, she was awarded the Guinness World Record for being the oldest woman to circumnavigate the world solo. Socrates is a retired math teacher. Although her address is in Lyminster, England, she considers home to be her boat, Nereida. She will share stories from her incredible adventures at Growing Bolder Presents on Feb. 10 at the Center for Health & Wellbeing in Winter Park, Florida. To register, visit YourHealthandWellbeing.org/events.

The Big Life of Little Anthony

His 60-year Career is Going Strong



Photo: Michael Ochs Archives / Stringer

“If you have a true passion for something, don’t fight it, because your life starts when you give in and commit 100%.”

He was born Jerome Anthony Gourdine but became known worldwide by the name, Little Anthony. He didn’t just love music, he lived it. Music took him from the projects in Brooklyn, New York, to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

On this day, because of Growing Bolder’s curious probing, Gourdine is taking a brief look back.

“I don’t normally live in the past,” he said. “I’m all about today. What can I do today?”

Today, Gourdine is where he’s most comfortable: a recording studio. He’s far from his Las Vegas home and is now in Orlando at Solar Studio working on a project with acclaimed producer Michael Franklin.

“There aren’t many 79-year-olds who’ve still got it quite like Little Anthony,” Franklin said as he played back a freshly recorded track. “Listen to that. He sings his hits in the same key he did as a teenager and still hits the high notes!”

Gourdine’s voice is unmistakably recognizable. It should be, it’s been a big part of the popular music scene for over 60 years. He was just 17 when he had his first hit record. “Tears on My Pillow” sold over 1 million copies, peaking at No. 4 on the pop charts and No. 2 on the R&B charts. It didn’t surprise Gourdine.

“I don’t know how or why; but as long as I can remember, I had this spiritual belief that I would become a performer, a special performer” he said.

Gourdine was surrounded by music from birth. His mother was a gospel singer, and his father was a saxophone player in several big band orchestras. Three of his brothers were involved in music as was his entire neighborhood.

“In those days, what turned us city kids on were singing groups like the Ink Spots,” he remembered. “We’d all come out

and work on singing those harmonies all day, everyday. We were just street corner doo-wop kids, but that’s where I learned.”

After the success of “Tears on My Pillow,” Little Anthony and the Imperials released another million-selling hit the next year with “Shimmy, Shimmy Ko-Ko Bop.” At the age of 19, he had two hit records and says there was nowhere for him to go but down.

“The success was great, but my life was a mess,” he said. “The sex, drugs and rock and roll nearly took my life.”

Gourdine began a slow spiral into alcohol, drugs and depression — things he would battle for most of his life.

“But by the grace of God I am still here today,” he said. “Many of my peers are not.”

More hits would follow, such as “Going Out of My Head” and “Hurts So Bad” and Gourdine’s powerful, heartfelt tenor voice became the defining sound of an era. Today, the band continues to tour and Gourdine performs on stage and in plays, including a one-man show about the ups and downs of his remarkable life’s journey.

“I love to tell stories about how much fun it was growing up, being friends with Sam Cooke back in Harlem when he came up to sing with the Soul Stirrers,” he said as his smile vanished. “And then I leaped right into that commercial success chapter of my life that was a personal disaster. It could have killed me, but somehow I was saved. So many of my peers are gone. Drugs, alcohol, whatever it was that took their lives, it was their lifestyle that destroyed them.”

“So, to anybody like me who’s getting on in years, anytime you’re lost in life, just look to the Lord. That’s what did it for me,” he advises. “When you follow your passion, what you’re really doing is making use of the gifts God gave you; and it’ll bring you the greatest joy you’ve ever had, even if you’re 79 like me.”



Sheila E's definition of the glamorous life

Photos: Bennett Raglin & Michael Ochs Archives / Stringer

You'd probably assume that famed percussionist and Prince protege Sheila Escovito, better known by her stage name, Sheila E., is referring to music but she isn't. Instead, she believes we all share a common purpose, to make a difference in the lives of others, and that is her takeaway.

"No matter what we do for a living we all have the same job: to plant the seed of love in someone's life, to be a blessing to someone else every single day," she said, "and that's a message that seems to go hand-in-hand with Growing Bolder."

Escovito believes along with that mission comes the responsibility of taking a stand in the face of injustice. It's almost as if through her latest album, "ICONIC: Message 4 America," she anticipated the protests and demonstrations that would follow the death of George Floyd. The songs she chose to record, such as Marvin Gaye's "Inner City Blues," and The Pointer Sisters' "Yes We Can," strike powerful chords in support of the movement and placed her at the forefront in the fight for equality — exactly where she wants to be.

"There's so much hatred and division in our times right now," she said. "But if each of us, me included, calls it out and exposes it, maybe we can change it. What we have to do is bring people together through love, because if we choose love, hate goes away."

She's been creating change since 2001, when she founded the organization Elevate Hope, which grew into a collaborative community initiative called Elevate Oakland, a not-for-profit

group providing mentoring to students involved in arts and music. She says for her, helping others is a way of life.

"It's the way we were raised," she explained. "Even though we didn't have much, my parents insisted we give back, even if it's simply giving someone a reason to smile."

Playing drums since the age of three, she is celebrating her 60th year performing and has no plans to stop anytime soon, although she admits to making some adjustments to keep up with the physical requirements of her performances.

"For me, it's all about prevention, whether it's working out, eating right, avoiding the virus or getting enough sleep," she said. "I'm not saying I feel like I did when I was 30, but I'm sure loving life in my 60s."

For Sheila E., it's all about entertaining audiences and making a difference in people's lives. A two-part harmony for a life well lived!

**It's a gift.
It's a passion.
It's my purpose.**

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